



OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report Title	Temporary Accommodation and Homelessness Prevention
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Meeting Date:	13 July 2020
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Councillor Stephen Hibbert

1. Introduction

- 1.1 After considering the Council's Performance Report for Quarter 3 of 2019/20, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee has requested more information about two Measures:
- **HML01** – Total number of households living in temporary accommodation
 - **HML07** – Number of households that are prevented from becoming homeless
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with additional information about the number of households living in temporary accommodation and the number of households prevented from becoming homeless.

2. HML01 – Total number of households living in temporary accommodation

- 2.1 During Quarter 3, the Council continued to receive a high number of homelessness applications and requests for temporary accommodation (TA). This demand for TA continued to be fuelled by the 56 'relief duty' placed on the Council by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which came into effect in April 2018.
- 2.2 Unfortunately, despite all of the action that has been taken to reduce the Council's use of TA, the number of households moving out of TA has failed to keep pace with the number of households moving into TA.
- 2.3 As a result of this high demand and the severe shortage of affordable housing that homeless households living in temporary accommodation were able to move into, the overall number of households in temporary accommodation increased as follows:
- **Sep 2019: 348** • **Oct 2019: 353** • **Nov 2019: 368** • **Dec 2019: 364**

2.4 Although the number of households living in temporary accommodation continued to rise, improvements were made to the living conditions of the households living in temporary accommodation – including families with children – and, throughout this Quarter, the Council very rarely used Bed & Breakfast and/or out-of-borough temporary accommodation for homeless households containing a child or pregnancy.

3. HML007 – Number of households that are prevented from becoming homeless

3.1 During 2019/20, the Housing Advice & Options Service has been reorganised and expanded to provide it with the extra management capacity it requires in relation to homelessness prevention, temporary accommodation and single homelessness.

3.2 With its focus on early intervention, the reorganisation has created specialist advisory roles that will work proactively and effectively with other services and organisations to prevent and reduce homelessness and ensure that, when someone is leaving prison, hospital or care, they do so in a planned way.

3.3 Although it proved more difficult than expected to attract applicants with the right skills, qualities and experience – and this delayed the filling of some key roles in the Housing Advice & Options Service – the number of households that were prevented from becoming homeless during Quarter 3 was encouraging:

- **Sep 2019: 46**
- **Oct 2019: 38**
- **Nov 2019: 57**
- **Dec 2019: 37**

3.4 The Housing Advice & Options Service was particularly effective at preventing private tenants from becoming homeless (and helping tenants to secure alternative private rented housing) by negotiating with landlords and letting agents.

3.5 The Service was also very successful at persuading applicants' families and friends to continue accommodating them (as part of the 'Homeless at Home' scheme) in order to prevent them from losing their accommodation and having to move into TA.

Phil Harris
Director of Housing and Wellbeing